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**Testimony of Reginald “Reggie” Beamon**  
**To**  
**The Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee**  
**S.B. 461**  
**March 28, 2016**

**Begin:**

Representative Berger and Senator Fonfara, my former colleagues and all honorable members, for the record I am Reggie Beamon of Waterbury, Connecticut. I apologize for my absence at the hearing, as a staff shortage has kept me in the office this morning. Kindly accept this e-testimony indicating my support of S.B. 461.

For the past 18 years I have directed Waterbury Opportunities Industrialization Center, Inc. (WOIC), a grassroots, faith based independent non-profit which specializes in life and job skills training.

Our work also includes assistance to minority contractors and small businesses which are primarily minority.

In addition, as a former partner in a small business, I have first hand knowledge of the importance of S.B. 461 coupled with passage of S.B.1 which was recently heard, if implemented, would provide new business opportunity and jobs in underserved communities.

As the file copy indicates, S.B. 461 would allow the Commissioner of DECD, in its “small business express” program to dedicate funding to “not more than two minority business entities” and I think we know who they are at this point.

These two entities do not have a footprint in cities like Waterbury.

WOIC has had discussions with one of these programs and based on our work, we have proposed to become a satellite center to serve our community.

Current language does not address participation of community based non-profit business entities who could participate with recruitment and outreach. I would hope the Committee would consider drafting substitute language to include community based non-profit entities like WOIC to serve as a feeder which would conduct intake, marketing and assistance to “feed” the contracted minority business development entities. The “administrative costs” should be expanded for a possible satellite pilot for our city and later on expand to other underserved communities. Our OIC network has five centers in New Haven, Bridgeport, New London, New Britain and Waterbury...and I assert we could help.

Overall, S.B. 461 would serve as a catalyst and a boon for our struggling minority business community, which are primarily located in our inner cities and employ many.

Again, the concept of S.B. 461 is innovative and as noted, along with S.B. 1, our inner city communities will have new hope and opportunity, upon their adoption and implementation.

I support these efforts.

Thank you.

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